

A religious painting depicting Saint Anthony, a Franciscan monk, kneeling in prayer and conversation with the Christ Child. The Christ Child is seated on a large, open book. Above them, a group of cherubs (putti) are shown in a dynamic, playful pose. The scene is set in a dark, cave-like environment with dramatic lighting highlighting the figures.

Saint Anthony

and

You

Saint Anthony and You

By

Reverend Juniper Cummings, O.F.M., Conv.

Cover Art: *Saint Anthony of Padua with the Child*, oil on canvas, painted in 1665 by Spanish painter and draughtsman, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682). The original is currently at the Museum of Fine Arts of Seville, Spain. This is a faithful photographic reproduction of an original two-dimensional work of art.*



* The work of art itself is in the public domain in the United States and countries with a copyright term of life of the author plus 100 years or less.

Prayer Gets Results

We are a notoriously practical people. The antics and marriages of royalty do interest us, but our main interest is not so much “*who*” does what but “*what*” he or she does. What can it produce? What do we get out of it? It might be true that other people are interested in the “*who*” of a person or thing, but basically, we are pragmatic, utilitarian.

This drive to see results, to count productions, carries over into our spiritual life, and we are not too wrong. After all, Christ Himself said, “By their fruits you shall know them.” The deserved popularity of Saint Anthony might be, in part, a clue to his effects. Many people are “*Anthonian*,” devotees of Saint Anthony, because he *does* answer prayers. There is an aspect of the practicality of devotion to Saint Anthony that we should not neglect. Neglect it we dare not, because it would be such a waste—a potential unrealized.

As stated in his litany, Saint Anthony is a mirror. We should get a good look at Saint Anthony when we approach him to ask for something. He is a mirror because we go up to him and his reflection on us reassures us that our prayers will be heard. Saint Anthony did many things extremely well for God. God simply does not refuse to answer any prayer with the stamp of or image of the Saint of Padua. Saint Anthony makes up for many of our blemishes and his heavenly handsomeness makes up for our worldly ugliness. He is called a mirror because he intercedes for us even if we are not the beauties we should be.

God has gentle ways and effective means to draw us to Himself. All creatures participate in His goodness. The saints share in His love to a greater degree and, through them, He draws us to an even greater love of Himself. In this way, devotion to Saint Anthony is eminently practical. We approach the great saint and, facing him, we begin to show forth his virtues. We become more like him; we get better. Through our devotion to Saint Anthony, we learn about him and what we learn is good. By the very nature of things, we are attracted to good and going to Saint Anthony, the mirror, makes us become more attractive—more Godlike.

Mirror of Abstinence

In his Litany, Saint Anthony is called the “Mirror of Abstinence.” Abstaining is a quality of a God who is infinite and unlimited, yet practices limitation in His mercy and justice. The Infinite created the finite, according to various limited participations in His unlimited perfections. Saint Anthony reflects this godly quality. He practiced that restraint which is abstinence—restraint even in legitimate pleasures. Saint Anthony’s abstinence was in keeping poverty, chastity, and obedience and the abstinence required for the tremendous work of preaching, teaching, and writing.

If we go to the life of Saint Anthony, we find that he is an example of abstinence, an example that lends itself to imitation. Saint Anthony is not noted for unusual or frightening penances and mortifications. He lived up to his way of life as a priest and friar. In living up to this way, he became a mirror of true and imitable abstinence.

Saint Anthony, Mirror of Abstinence, will offer your prayers to God and God will hear you through him. The life and work of Saint Anthony will show you how to live. To live as a married person requires abstinence from many things. To live as a single person requires much abstinence. Priests and religious must, like Saint Anthony, practice abstinence. Saint Anthony, who always answers, shows us the way. Be practical, pray to Saint Anthony and you will get what you need: not only the answer to your appeals but also growth in goodness.

Saint Anthony, Mirror of Abstinence, pray for us.

Vessel of Purity

In his Litany, Saint Anthony is called the “Vessel of Purity.” That title gives us a concrete and correct idea of purity. Purity is something. It is not a mere negation or lack of something—it is a positive quality. Purity is plenty, fullness, and riches. Purity is good order, harmony, peace, and contentment because it is Godlike—an imitation of God. God alone is all pure because God is Perfection, Beauty, and Happiness.

A container can be empty, which would make it an absence. If a container is a vessel of something, the something is positive and not just an absence. Saint Anthony is a vessel filled with Godly purity. By Saint Anthony's will, he disposes himself, with God's ever-loving help, to receive and hold and dispense this quality of good order, proper subordination, and wholesome harmony that is Godlike.

It is strange that when we speak of purity in relation to a person we usually refer to the sex life of that individual. There is something very revealing about our identification of purity and sex. We should know that a virgin can be pure or impure or that a married man can be pure or impure. What we really mean when we speak of purity is that an individual is pure as long as he is not blemished by a misuse of sex.

There is, however, much more to purity than that. There is, for instance, purity of intention, which has nothing to do with the sixth commandment as such. When a man is pure, he does all things for God in a way God wants them done. His will is pure because he intends what God wills. There is no self-seeking and selfishness in him. Instead, there is a proper order and harmony in his actions and in his motives.

A man can pay a just wage, go to Mass, or even avoid adultery for an immoral motive. Say a man does all this to establish a reputation so he could, at a later date, perpetrate a fraud or murder someone. Such a man is not pure; he is lacking in the harmony, order, and right reason that is purity.

We cannot be unrealistic, though, about the prevalence of sins of sex. Our Lady at Fatima said that more people go to hell because of sins against the sixth and ninth commandments than for any other reason. Saint Anthony wrote in his sermon for the fourth Sunday after Easter, "The world is more stained with the sins of fornication than with any other sin." There we have it. When we identify purity with the sixth and ninth commandments, we are merely recognizing the sinning situation of the multitude.

Saint Anthony was a member of the so-called passionate Latin race, yet he was a vessel of purity. His was the purity of harmony between his body and his soul, between his soul and God. He realized, practiced, and preached that principle of reason and nature confirmed by the commandments that sex is

primarily for procreation in marriage, and only incidentally a source of pleasure. He taught that a miser might abstain from sins of sex and still not be pure. He recalled that the Lord spoke of virgins who were foolish and did not make the grade. Saint Anthony was forceful in his condemnation of any kind of impurity. He is called “Vessel of Purity” because he charted the way to purity by his life and works.

Saint Anthony gives practical norms to preserve or regain purity and he continues to aid by his prayers. He advocated mortification and the shunning of idleness. He gave us two additional remedies and preventives.

Meditation on the Passion of Christ is much stressed by the Paduan Preacher. He succinctly stated, “The memory of the Crucified crucifies vice.” Finally, the saint urged serious thought about the eternal life.

Therefore, the busy man who practices mortification, meditates on the Passion of Christ, and considers life after death will have a purity of intention and thought. Purity of word and action will be his. The disturbing increase in, private and public crime can be checked if the remedies proposed by Saint Anthony are used.

The Saint of Padua, who is a vessel of purity, will find purity for us and for our civilization if we pray to him, follow his advice, and imitate his example.

Saint Anthony, Vessel of Purity, pray for us!

Model of Obedience

In all of creation, there is subordination. The Creator Himself, in His wisdom and goodness, designed this order.

Only those who are living according to God’s way are obedient. They are the saints. There is no saint, married or single, rich or poor, bishop or religious brother, who does not have the occasion and duty to obey. That is the way God planned it. All of this obedience and subordination in creatures, rational, animal, plant or mineral, is subjection to God.

Obedience to any superior is obedience to God. That is the secret, the mystery, the reality. When we observe the Ten Commandments, it is not merely because Moses obeyed them. It is not due to the looks or personality of the lawgiver. We obey them because they came from God.

When we abstain from meat on Friday, it is not because the Pope abstains; it is because we know God's will through the Popes. When we do our job at work it is not because of the boss or supervisor; it is because we are following our conscience as directed by God. The youngster who is forbidden to smoke by his father must obey even if his father is a chain smoker.

Too often, obedience is not really obedience—it is a matter of imitation. Imitation is often a matter of friendship or affection for the individual who gives the direction. This may be good, but it is not obedience. It is subjection to another creature for the sake of the other creature and not for God's sake.

Saint Anthony is a model of obedience because he obeyed God. He followed his superiors' directions because God spoke through them not because they were superior.

Anthony, as a Franciscan, was far more intelligent and holy than most of his superiors. Yet, he obeyed. He obeyed the Pope. He obeyed the uneducated superior who told him to wash the dishes. Because he obeyed not for his own or his superior's sake, but for God's sake, he is our example of true obedience.

If we realize the nature of obedience, we can see that each of us has a duty to obey. It would be more correct to say the privilege, the honor to obey because when we obey our parents, a police officer, doctors, or our pastors we are being directed by God. As long as one in authority gives directions that are not against God's will, they are the directions of God. To be subject to God knowingly and willingly is a secure position; it is the fulfillment of our nature.

Saint Anthony, in his sermon for the second Sunday of Advent, mentions five qualities that the virtue of obedience requires. Obedience is humble, devout, prompt, cheerful, and persevering.

Obedience is humble because it sees that God has subjected us to someone. Obedience is devout because it is an exercise of religion for, in obeying, we render homage to God. Obedience is prompt because there will be no delay in

executing commands that come from God. Obedience is joyful and cheerful because we are happy to be what God wants us to be. Obedience is permanent because God does not change.

There is power in obedience. There is superiority in being subjected. Saint Anthony shows us the *way of obedience* in his earthly life and the *effects of obedience* in his heavenly life. He had tremendous power over creatures because he was completely subject to the Creator. Our Paduan Friar who obeyed inferior superiors soared to the heights of sanctity. He exercises his power for our benefit from those exalted heights.

Saint Anthony always answered God when God spoke through his superiors. Now, God always says “yes” to Anthony when he asks something of Him for us.

Saint Anthony, Model of Obedience, Pray for us!

Star of Sanctity

Not everyone can be President. That is a fact, even if it might shatter the dreams, if not expectations, of many parents. We are made with different native abilities, then molded and formed by our environment and education. The use we make of free choice of circumstances and opportunities is a great factor in shaping and equipping us for various work, offices, and obligations, as well as for dignities and honors.

In the natural, political, and social orders, this difference is a fact. Just as one star differs from another star and each has a different role in the universe, so it is with different human beings. Although, in a particular work, one person might substitute for another person, we are all different. One individual is able to do several particular works or even go from one field to another; but, in the overall picture, each man has a distinctive role. That role is determined most certainly by man’s free will, but also by his natural talents and make-up, as well as by his environment, training, and circumstances.

This natural order gives us a hint about the supernatural order. Grace does not destroy, but perfects nature. Franciscan theologians teach that the natural was

made for the supernatural order, because what is higher and greater is willed by God more than what is lower and less great. It is true to say that, the inferior is intended and willed for the superior. Thus, it was and is that all inferior creatures are to be subject to man. Add to this the truth that all of creation is an imitation of the Creator according to degrees. Since God is infinitely perfect, it is fitting that there be all degrees of participation in being. According to the natural and supernatural orders, this diversity is fitting. That is the way God planned it.

In our litany, we say, “Saint Anthony, Star of Sanctity, pray for us.” We know Saint Anthony is not the only saint in heaven, not the only star in the glorious heaven of the blessed. We know that he is a great, beautiful, powerful, and attractive star who is our inspiration, consolation, help, and guide while we navigate the choppy seas of this life. Sanctity is soundness, safety, and sanity; and as we flounder about we need a steady, shining star—a star that is our ideal, our hero.

Not everyone can or should be able to be president. However, everyone can, should, and must be a saint. Here Saint Anthony, Star of Sanctity, shines through as the next invocation of the litany calls him, a “model of perfection.” Not a minor factor in our wherewithal for sanctity is the shining example and powerful prayer of Saint Anthony.

Star differs from star, saint differs from saint, but each is perfect. Saint Anthony, in two different sermons, wrote of this difference and sameness in sanctity. He quoted scripture saying, “In My Father’s house there are many mansions.” He explained using the example of the pomegranate that has many seeds under one skin, but each seed has its own cell. He goes on to say there will be no sadness because of these differences and inequalities.

“Everyone will be equally joyful about the differences in joy because I will rejoice over your goodness even as I rejoice about mine, and you will be as happy at my happiness as you are at your own. For example, if we were together and I had a rose of mine in my hand, you would enjoy its beauty and fragrance just as I would. So will it be in eternal life—my glory will refresh and exalt you and vice versa.” So wrote Saint Anthony.

You and I will never be Saint Anthony but, if we follow his star and perfect ourselves according to his example, we will share one day in his glory and in the meantime reap the benefits of his power. While on the way to heaven, we have his help. We rejoice in his good and in that of our earthly and heavenly neighbors. If we navigate by our Anthonian star and form ourselves after our model, there is no reason for envy or hatred. There is reason just for the happiness that is sanctity and perfection.

Saint Anthony, Star of Sanctity, pray for us!

Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant was the beautiful container in which the Jews placed the tablet of the law. While they were in the desert, the Ark was respectfully and reverently kept in the center of their camp. Once the temple was built, the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies. God dwelt over the Ark in a very special manner, in that the Ark was the throne of God.

The Ark reminded the Jews of their special relation to God. In a special way, God was with them. They were His chosen people.

Between God and the Jews, there was a pact—an agreement called the Covenant. The Old Testament is the history of the past and the New Testament is the record of the pact between God and the new chosen people—the Christians. The new pact, or agreement, was, in effect, the will of God making us His heirs. The Old Testament Ark symbolized this heritage.

Saint Anthony is called “Ark of the Covenant” in his Litany because he is the precious and magnificent handwork of God. In him, the law of God was contained and fulfilled perfectly. The evangelical counsels and the Ten Commandments were his norm—his way of life. God placed him in the midst of the Church and he is now in the Holy of Holies of the celestial Jerusalem.

Of course, God is everywhere. Just as He was omnipresent in the time of the Old Testament, He dwelt and operated in a special manner over the Ark. So too, God, omnipresent, dwelt and dwells in great Saint Anthony in a special manner. He works powerfully in and through him.

Saint Anthony, by his preaching and works, is an assurance for us that we are chosen to be more than men because we are heirs of God. We are His children and we inherit His kingdom.

We can and should ask all favors of Saint Anthony and most of us do ask all kinds. The most urgent, necessary favor is that we retain or regain the title to the inheritance that is called sanctifying grace. Receiving sanctifying grace is a favor because no one deserves it and no one earns it. It is grace; it is gratuitous; it is a gift from God.

If we pray to Saint Anthony, the Ark of the Covenant, we can be confident that God will hear to our prayers.

Another lesson can be learned from the invocation, “Ark of the Covenant.” We are now the chosen people. We have taken up where the mass of Jews left off. This very fact of our spiritual lineage should make us work and pray that the members of the race once chosen might find their place in the New Testament. There. We have something else we should ask of Saint Anthony. “Ark of the Covenant, pray for the conversion of the Jews.”

The Ark of the Covenant has shown us how to keep the law, the whole law. Love of God and neighbor—that is the law. All men are neighbors, especially those that are bound to us by some ties. Close and real are the spiritual ties that bind us to the members of the race that God singled out to be the blood family of Jesus, Mary, and the Apostles.

*Saint Anthony, Ark of the Covenant, Keeper of the Law,
Treasury of the Pact of our Inheritance, Sent of God, pray for us!*

Pray that we keep the pledge of sonship, sanctifying grace.

Pray that all men, especially the Jews, be brought into the family of Christ.

Teacher of Truth

In these days of the accepted big lie and the habitual little lie, we need to learn from a teacher of truth. We need to be able to distinguish truth from falsehood when we hear it. We need to be able to speak the truth if we are going to speak at all.

Saint Anthony was a popular preacher, not because he told thousands who came to hear him what was nice for them to hear, but because he told them the truth. He told them the truth even when it was very difficult to understand and more difficult to live.

Our teacher spoke the truth regarding profound mysteries like the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Eucharist. These revealed truths surpass all human capacity to understand easily. Saint Anthony presented them in graphic forms with warm and intriguing figures of speech.

Our teacher of truth spoke of the “mystery of iniquity”—sin. He stood firm and preached eloquently against tyranny and abuses of civil power. The humble priest-friar attacked the vices of those in high places.

Our saint labeled the sins of malice and weakness committed by the ordinary people for what they were—offences against God and degradations of man.

The secret sins of all were denounced by the holy preacher. Saint Anthony pointed out that no sin was secret or private. With fearlessness, the saint truthfully taught that God knows all and that, as Christ said, “Nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest.” On the Day of Judgment, Christ, the kind and merciful man, will be the just and severe man.

Because we are all members of one race, one society, and are, really or potentially, all members of Christ’s Mystical Body, every sin offends the entirety of humanity, every sin harms society, every sin offends the entirety of humanity, and every sin wounds the Mystical Body. This truth, unpleasant as it is to the sinner, this truth, startling in its consequences, the Paduan Preacher proclaimed.

Saint Anthony is the teacher of truth because he taught of Christ, Who is the Truth. This is the central theme of Anthony’s words, work, and life.

The more we follow our Saint Anthony, the closer we come to Christ the Truth. Then we will easily make the difficult distinction between truth and falsehood, between black and white.

The more we follow our saint the more we will choose the lighter grays among the partial truths or the relative betters.

The more we follow our saint, the more grace we will obtain to seek, follow, and tell the truth in our daily lives.

The more we follow our saint, the more assurance we have that he will hear our prayers.

The truth of Saint Anthony is Christ. Pray to Saint Anthony that, like him, you can learn Christ.

To learn Christ is a big job. It is such an enormous task that it takes an eternity. If one does not start now or if one gives up, one is doomed to the unending confusion and frustration of the error. With Satan, the father of lies, one is condemned to hell.

*Saint Anthony, Teacher of Truth,
Pray for us that we may overcome Satan by the truth that you taught.
Pray, Saint Anthony, that we may ever strive to reach and hold
The Truth who is Christ!*

Physician of Souls

It is extremely easy and common to see and point out faults. This is especially true if it is a matter of the faults and vices, real or imagined, of others. It is hard and extraordinary to see consistently virtue and good qualities in others. Stop and think about yourself as you are, as you really are, and more often than not, you will find that the things that most annoy, disgust, and bother you in others are qualities that you have yourself.

It is very easy to tear down, and very hard to build up. It is much harder to aid constructively than to censure severely. Those who block good are more prevalent than those who make ready and open the way to good.

The great Saint Anthony was a Franciscan, and Franciscans have always been *for* more than they are *against*. The Litany of Saint Anthony, immediately after calling on the sainted friar an exterminator of vices, adds “Planter of Virtue.”

With human beings, there is no vacuum. Christ, Anthony's model and mover, says, "You are either for me or against me." Thus, it was too that Anthony not only rooted out vices but he also planted virtues.

Against sin in general and its horrible consequences, Anthony was most eloquent. Against pride, anger, avarice, impurity, vainglory, envy, and gluttony our saint was ruthless. In rooting them out, he was zealous but he was even more assiduous in planting Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, and Prudence.

Great preacher and sound doctor of theology that he was, wise Saint Anthony insisted over and over again that the Sacrament of Penance not only roots out vices, but is also an effective means to instill virtues. Saint Anthony insisted that the Sacrament of Penance was a sure way to progress in virtue.

For a good confession, one must have sorrow for sins, and Saint Anthony referred to this sorrow as a stream of fire that destroys vice and causes virtue to flourish. The purpose of amendment is the assurance that the seeds of virtue will grow to strong plants and that the faint light will become bright and strong. Contrition and satisfaction make the terrain rich and productive; they keep out the vices by well cultivating the fields.

Confession must be complete by considering and mentioning circumstances that alter the nature of the sin. For this reason, a positive directive of Saint Anthony is the consideration of who, what, where, with whom, how often, why, and when. These points are to be considered not only because they can alter the gravity of the sin, but also because they are important in the development of the opposite virtue.

Impurity committed by a married man is to be overcome differently from the method used by a single boy. The sin against the fifth commandment is remedied differently if it be one of thought than if it be by word and still more differently if it be by deed. If a sinful action is rare or frequent, the treatment for it is diversified. Hence, the number, or at least an estimate of the number, is to be given.

The “why” of the sin is of tremendous importance in its avoidance. The most effective remedy is to remove the cause of evil and supplant it with a cause that is productive of good.

In Confession, the most important things are to be confessed first. All mortal sins must be mentioned as far as they are remembered, because these are the things that need most to be supplanted by virtues. If one has no mortal sins, then the venial sins that keep us most from God, for which we have contrition and amendment are to be mentioned so the virtues that they block may wax strong.

Saint Anthony, phenomenal preacher, sublime saint, and compassionate confessor, taught that the well-used Sacrament of Penance was the most effective way to grow in virtue.

He planted virtues with his preaching. To be assuredly fruitful, the planting was intended to be in the grace of the Sacrament of Penance.

To receive the sacrament worthily was an exercise of the fundamental virtues of humility, religion, and devotion. It roots out the faults and plants virtues.

Pray to Saint Anthony that he will aid you and all his friends to make a good confession. Pray that you will follow his advice in having real sorrow for sin and true determination not to sin. Pray that you will recognize clearly, and confess properly, the circumstances of your sins. Pray to Saint Anthony that you will make satisfaction for past sins.

Pray and Saint Anthony will answer your prayers and you will grow in virtue. You will see your own weakness and appreciate the good in others.

Saint Anthony, Physician of Souls, pray for us!

Guide of the Erring

None of us would be a good risk for a supernatural insurance company. We are all accident-prone when it comes to the life and well-being of the soul. Going astray and erring comes easy to us.

Mortal sin is the big mistake in human living and a life of sin is the real tragedy. Each mortal sin is a turning from the path of happiness. Each mortal sin is an action in discord with our nature as rational, social, and created.

One mortal sin is a terrible, horrible, ugly, and stupid mistake. There is only one thing worse than a mortal sin and that is two or more mortal sins. In such habitual sin, we not only skip off the path of perfection but we also deliberately travel a miserable road to eternal frustration.

Sometimes, and we hope for the friends of Saint Anthony this is most of the time, we don't entirely abandon the road to heaven for mortal sin. Instead, we zigzag, run with one foot off the road, or dance precariously along the edge looking to the side or behind us. This is erring, too, but only in a venial way.

By his life and teaching and prayers, Saint Anthony is a guide to real fulfillment and happiness. Saint Anthony was and is the guide, the conductor, and the regulator of the erring. He brings us back when we are lost in a sinful state of habitual mortal sin. He also retrieves us when we have jumped from the road by a single mortal sin.

Saint Anthony, Guide of the Erring, saw the way to heaven not so much as straight and narrow, but as a wonderful and glorious road because Christ the God-Man said, "I am the Way." Difficult, yes; but delightful! Straight, yes; but safe, sound, and sane. Narrow, but comfortable with the expanding joy of being a rational, social, and great creature of the loving Creator.

There are all kinds of mistakes and errors. They all entail turning your back to Christ. To make them more apparent, each of us should ask himself, "What do I want most in life? In going along the path of life, what signs do I follow?" The advertisers of our nation are great psychologists when it comes to observing what makes people desire products. They appeal through blunt or subtle sensuality and to worldly success. They use false signs and values.

Saint Anthony knew there would be such signs and values and he warned against them. He knew if man followed those signs and values he would lose his way along the road or at least run onto the soft shoulder of the road.

What are your values, your standards? What do you want most for yourself and your children?

Some time ago, a Catholic youngster wrote to “Cordette” (a literary magazine for young teenagers published by the Conventual Franciscans). He asked, “What right have you to criticize rock singers? I bet they have more money than you have. You are just jealous because the girls like them better than they do you.” This young person is no doubt a good Catholic, and we mean in no way to insinuate that he is sinful. He is just a young spokesman of our age who needs the guiding of Saint Anthony’s teaching to be properly oriented.

If we are in the state of grace, we are on the right road, yet, we may be far off center. If adults are unbalancing our civilization in favor of sensuality and materialism, the youngsters will fall off first.

It may be shocking to see our youth going wild but, if we look honestly at the overtones and undertones of our adult standards, we should not be surprised. If we follow the wrong signs, how can we expect our youth not to?

We need the adult Christianity of Saint Anthony’s preaching and examples. Pray to the Guide of the Erring. He will help all of us, young and old.

*Saint Anthony, Guide of the Erring,
Pray for our family, our nation, our civilization.
Pray for us!*

Preacher of Grace

The Wonder-worker of Padua is called Preacher of Grace in his Litany. First, he taught and preached about grace. Grace is the gift of God that makes us partakers in the Divine Life. This participation in God’s life is supernatural; above our power, and given to us freely. Grace, then, is a gift.

Saint Anthony taught the truth when he taught that we need this gift super added to God’s natural help to obtain a state of grace and to remain in that supernatural condition.

God helps us in many supernatural ways and this help is grace. In his sound, healthy, mature approach, Saint Anthony uses a figure to illustrate this. Like a

mother who weans her child by putting something bitter on her breast, so the Holy Spirit sometimes gives us a taste of the bitterness of this world so we can acquire a taste for the solid food of the other world.

Grace enables us to live on earth but act and think as citizens of heaven. We must only cooperate, do our part, and use our will to keep this precious gift.

Precious gift that grace is, we need it to have not only eternal happiness in heaven but also to have any measure of true happiness here on earth. Saint Anthony says, "The man in mortal sin is nothing because God, Who alone truly is, is not in him through grace."

Anthony, a great theologian and truly human as he was, understands that man could and does lose grace through mortal sin. Mortal sin is the greatest and only true tragedy that can befall man. The supreme stupidity of sin is only topped by the useless, wasteful evil of remaining in sin once a person has fallen.

Saint Anthony pleaded, insisted, urged, and demanded that the Sacrament of Penance be used frequently to revive the life of grace. Pointing out how dreadful it was to live in sin, he also noted that waste is involved. Everyone does good things, but they are of no supernatural value if the doer is not in the state of grace. The Christian in the state of sin can bear no fruit, since he does not have the necessary equipment.

Grace is a gift from God and it is the most important thing in this life. Grace is to be prayed for, guarded, and regained immediately, if lost. This is the truth about grace taught by Saint Anthony, the preacher of grace.

The great Franciscan saint of Padua is Preacher of Grace in another way. Not only did he preach about it, but his preaching was also grace for many in his own day and innumerable souls throughout the ages. By means of the words of Saint Anthony, God moved many to regain the state of grace. He was and is able to rouse the hearts of many of his listeners because his well-chosen human words were backed by the Divine Power.

So great was Anthony's grace that God continuously delights in giving His wondrous gift of supernatural life to others through and because of Saint Anthony.

Grace is most assuredly something personal, given to individuals. Grace is, however, something social because a man is a child of God and grows more and more like God through grace. Man participates by God's free condescension in the power of God. A Christian in the state of grace can and does produce supernatural fruit, not only for himself but for others. Saint Anthony is able and willing to help all those who need help. (Who does not need help?) We need but to listen to his help and he will help us and ours.

*Saint Anthony, Preacher of Grace, pray for us.
We ask you for graces for ourselves and for our dear ones.*

Nihil Obstat:

Bernard Marthaler, O.F.M. Conv.

Imprimi Potest:

Basil Heiser, O.F.M. Conv.

Provincial

Imprimatur:

✠ Right Reverend George Casey

Administrator, Archdiocese of Chicago

August 8, 1958



This e-book was produced by:

The Seraphim Company, Inc.

**8528 Kenosha Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80908-5000**

www.servi.org